

**REPORT/RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
OF SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA  
AND RECORD OF ACTION**

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**May 4, 2004**

*Continued from April 27, 2004*

**FROM:**       **PETER R. HILLS**, Fire Chief/Fire Warden  
San Bernardino County Consolidated Fire District  
**PATRICK J. MEAD**, Interim Director  
Department of Public Works

**SUBJECT:**    **ACCEPTANCE OF GRANT FROM THE UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE FOR THE  
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA DROUGHT ASSISTANCE STATE FIRE ASSISTANCE  
GRANT PROGRAM**

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. Accept the United States Forest Service State Fire Assistance Grant in the amount of \$6,773,000 with an equal match of \$6,773,000, to be used for developing sustainable fuel barriers, defensible spaces and community protection zones on private lands in the mountain communities of the San Bernardino Mountains, for a two-year period.
2. Authorize the County Fire Department to purchase unbudgeted fixed assets to be used for fuel reduction activities in connection with the grant:

<u>Fixed Asset</u>	<u>Amounts</u>
5 Passenger Vehicles (4X4 capable)	\$120,000
1 Wood splitter	\$4,000
1 Chipper	\$40,000
1 Compact track loader/grappler	\$55,000
1 Loader trailer	\$4,000
1 Truck, 4X4 chipper van crewcab	\$70,000
2 Trucks, 4X4 flatbed lift-gate crewcab	\$80,000

3. Authorize the County Department of Public Works to purchase unfunded fixed assets to be used for fuel reduction activities in connection with the grant:

<u>Fixed Asset</u>	<u>Amounts</u>
2 Dump Trucks, 2 axle	\$316,176
1 Loader Grappler	\$224,280
1 Limb Chipper	\$37,728

4. Authorize addition of the following contract positions to the County Fire Department to provide various services in connection with the San Bernardino Mountains Bark Beetle Infestation and Tree Mortality Remediation Emergency:

<u>Position Title</u>	<u>Pay Range</u>	<u>Unit of Representation</u>
Public Contact Block Coordinator	AW1 (\$33,841 - \$43,326)	Contract
Tree Trimmer	R47 (\$37,294 - \$47,590)	Contract
Staff Analyst I	AO2 (\$40,653 - \$52,032)	Contract

Record of Action of the Board of Supervisors

**CONTINUED TO TUE, 5/4/04 @ 10 A.M.**

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO**

MOTION	<u>SECOND</u>	<u>MOVE</u>	<u>NAY</u>	<u>AYE</u>	<u>AYE</u>
	1	2	3	4	5

**J. RENEE BASTIAN, CLERK OF THE BOARD**

BY \_\_\_\_\_

**DATED: April 27, 2004**

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ITEM 011

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5. Authorize addition of the following contract positions to the County Department of Public Works to provide various services in connection with the San Bernardino Mountains Bark Beetle Infestation and Tree Mortality Remediation Emergency:

<u>Position Title</u>	<u>Pay Range</u>	<u>No. of Positions</u>	<u>Unit of Representation</u>
Equipment Operator III	R45 (\$35,297 - \$45,094)	1	Contract
Equipment Operator II	R42 (\$32,822 - \$41,912)	7	Contract

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:** On February 10, 2004, the Board of Supervisors approved submission of a grant application to the United States Forest Service for the Southern California Drought Assistance State Fire Assistance Grant Program. The grant application was for \$6,773,678 to fund Fuels Reduction Projects. The Forest Service has approved the grant for \$6,773,000. The grant continues many activities already in progress, including removal of dead and dying trees; slash/debris removal services (Fuels Reduction), the Block Tree Removal Program, and continuation of the low- and moderate-income financial assistance program for tree removal in the communities of the San Bernardino Mountains. It also increases the evacuation route clearing effort to remove dead and dying trees from the roadsides by adding a Department of Public Works crew to assist the CDF tree felling crews clearing the evacuation routes.

Recommendation Number One

Approval of Recommendation Number One to accept the United States Forest Service Fuels Reduction grant will continue the projects/tasks established in the Tree Mortality Remediation Grant of June 2003, as approved by the Board of Supervisors on April 8, 2003. The projects/tasks in the grant are for reestablishment of fuel barriers, defensible spaces and community protection zones; removal of dead and dangerous trees posing a threat to life and property within the various communities of the San Bernardino Mountains, and a public education program on fire hazard mitigation and fuel reduction. The five tasks are:

- **Task One – Tree Removal Services:** Task One continues the Block Coordination Program for tree and fuel removal, low and moderate-income financial assistance started in the original Tree Mortality Remediation Grant approved by the Board on April 8, 2003, and augmented by the Board of Supervisors, and expands the task to include creation of fuel barriers and community protection zones. Staff support expands tree and fuel removal activities with the addition of three (3.0) additional Block Coordinators and two (2.0) Tree Permit Inspectors. Task One also funds two Inmate Crew Captains previously funded by a \$200,000 USDA Forest Service Rural Development, Forestry, and Community grant approved by the Board of Supervisors on February 4, 2003, and awarded to the County by the Forest Service on June 23, 2003.
- **Task Two – Slash and Debris Removal:** Task Two continues and expands the Slash and Debris removal portion of the Block Coordination Program with the addition of four (4.0) slash crewmembers, acquisition of necessary vehicles and equipment for the slash crew, and continuation of the slash transportation program. Task Two also expands evacuation route clearing along County-maintained roads with the addition of one (1.0) supervisor, (5.0) five crew members and equipment to the Department of Public Works to expand support of the CDF hand crews in establishing defensible zones along evacuation routes, and the Block Coordination Program slash crews when needed. Removal of slash generated by the Block Coordination Program expands to include slash removed along evacuation routes.
- **Task Three – Waste Management Services:** Task Three funds have been included in Task One under Tree and Fuels Removal.
- **Task Four – Long Term Control (Bark Beetle Study):** Task Four is not included in this grant but continues through the contract Forester, the Office of the Fire Marshal and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

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- Task Five - Public Education and Program Support: Task Five continues the current Public Education Specialist and public education literature and expands to include additional public education and outreach efforts. Program Support continues with the Staff Analyst II position currently funded as a match for the original grant. In addition, 1.0 Staff Analyst I is added to research additional funding opportunities and to assist in the increased program efforts of Tasks One and Two. One-half of an Emergency Services Officer is funded to continue activities that the Emergency Services Officer is performing relating to Bark Beetle Tree Mortality, MAST, and OES coordination. The grant project targets the communities of the San Bernardino Mountains and is for a two-year period.

Recommendation Number Two

Approval of this recommendation allows the Fire Department to purchase the listed fixed assets to continue and improve the Block Program and Slash Crews. Funds to lease the vehicles in the Fuels Reduction Grant, which will reimburse County Fire for equipment purchases, will be included in the County Fire Department FY 04/05 and 05/06 budgets.

Acquisition of the vehicles will permit the Block Coordinators and Slash Crews to use vehicles dedicated to Fuels Reduction activities, reduce down time due to inoperable vehicles and allow more efficient use of staff time and resources. The five passenger vehicles will be used by the Block Coordinators in locating, developing, and working various tree and fuel reduction blocks in the San Bernardino Mountain communities. The log splitter will permit diversion of wood that is currently being sent to disposal facilities into the firewood fuel stream. This firewood is being provided to low and moderate-income individuals at no cost on a first-come, first-serve basis.

The chipper will reduce volume of limbs and similar debris to a manageable state. The compact loader/grappler with trailer will permit the safe and rapid removal of larger debris and tree remnants from around residences and businesses now being done by hand. The chipper van will permit collection and transport of wood and fuel chips in a safe and efficient manner. The two lift-gate trucks will be used to transport larger logs to either the dump or alternative use sites, depending on material and demand.

Recommendation Number Three

Approval of Recommendation Number Three allows the Department of Public Works to purchase the above-listed fixed assets for fuel reduction activities in connection with the grant. Funds to lease the equipment in the Fuels Reduction Grant, which will reimburse Department of Public Works for equipment purchases, will be included in the County Department of Public Works FY 04/05 and 05/06 budgets.

The two dump trucks will be used to transport chips, felled trees, and fuel from the rights-of-way to waste disposal facilities or to alternative uses for the biomass. The loader/grappler will be utilized in removing dead and diseased trees and fuel felled by Inmate Crews from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection from along evacuation routes. The chipper will be used to chip smaller limbs and slash before removal from the right-of-way.

Recommendation Number Four

Approval of Recommendation Number Four allows the Fire Department to begin the recruitment process for the specified positions. The positions continue and expand the Block Program and Fuels Reduction efforts of the County Fire Department. Funds for the positions in this grant will be provided for in the County Fire Department FY 04/05 and 05/06 budgets. The Department will present these contracts for approval at a future date.

The addition of the Public Contact Block Coordinator will allow an expedited initial contact with residents living in potential blocks and prepare the way for tree removal and fuel reduction activities. The four Tree Trimmer positions expand the existing Slash Crew from a six-person crew to a ten-person crew, thus allowing the crews to continue slash removal operations while transporting slash and debris from Blocks to disposal or reuse sites. The Staff Analyst I will assist the Fuel Reduction Grant activities by researching

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additional funding sources, making recommendations, analyzing grant fiscal operations and contracts, monitoring various contracts, proposals, and applications, and assisting grant staff as assigned.

**Recommendation Number Five**

Approval of Recommendation Number Five allows the Department of Public Works to begin the recruitment process for the specified positions to continue and expand the Fuels Reduction effort along evacuation routes. Funds for the positions in this grant are in the above FY 03/04 budget adjustments and will be provided for in the County Department of Public Works FY 04/05 and 05/06 budgets. The Equipment Operator III is the lead worker and is responsible for supervising this crew. Two of the Equipment Operator

IIs are inspectors assisting the Fuels Reduction effort by inspecting tree and fuel removal operations within County road rights-of-way. The remaining five Equipment Operator IIs will remove tree and fuel felled by the CDF Inmate Crews. The removed trees and biomass will be transported to disposal facilities or diverted for alternative uses, depending upon the material being removed. The Department will present these contracts for approval at a future date.

**REVIEW AND APPROVAL BY OTHERS:** This item was reviewed by the County Administrative Office (Wayne Thies, Administrative Analyst, 387-5409, and Tom Forster, Administrative Analyst 387-4635) on April 16, 2004; and County Counsel (Dennis Tilton, Deputy County Counsel, 387-5246) on April 14, 2004.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:** The amount of the grant is \$6,773,000 to be received over a two-year period, and has a required equal match of \$6,773,000. The matching requirement can and will be satisfied in the form of in-kind contributions from non-federal government agencies, utilities and private property owner tree removal activities. The grant covers personnel, equipment costs, training, and planning/administrative costs. The unbudgeted fixed asset purchases will be initially funded by the Department of Public Works and the County Fire Department and subsequently will be reimbursed over a two-year period from grant proceeds. There is no fiscal impact to the County.

**COST REDUCTION REVIEW:** The County Administrative Office has reviewed this agenda item and concurs with the department's proposal and recommends this action on the basis that the fuel reduction activities will be fully funded by United States Forest Service State Fire Assistance funds that are not in jeopardy.

**SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT(S):** All.

**PRESENTER:** Peter R. Hills, 387-5952  
Patrick J. Mead, 387-7906  
Denise L. Benson, 356-3998

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